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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 001097

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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PNAT](#) [ECON](#) [EFIN](#) [KCRM](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: BAGHDAD BUSINESSES TARGETED IN ATTACKS

REF: EMAIL 3/29/06 AMMAN

Classified By: POLITICAL COUNSELOR ROBERT S. FORD, FOR
REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

11. (C) Summary. Businesses in Baghdad have been increasingly targeted as insurgents, criminals, and elements dressed as Iraqi Security Force (ISF) members concentrate on soft targets. These businesses have been targeted in two ways: small-scale but violent attacks on small entities such as bakeries and organized raids on larger businesses, often by groups dressed in ISF uniforms. The latter attacks have become more prominent in the past week. At least six companies were targeted over a four-day period March 27-30, resulting in the abduction and/or killings of numerous employees. Ministry of Interior officials deny involvement in such raids, but the use by these criminal groups of both MoI-type uniforms and vehicles have made business owners fearful, not only of insurgent attacks, but also of police. Private sector contacts say that they are conducting business behind closed doors, or may begin to shut down until things cool down. End Summary.

EXTRA-JUDICIAL RAIDS BECOME PROMINENT

12. (C) During the four-day period between March 27 and 30, several companies in high-end districts in Baghdad were targeted by organized groups. Mansour District Advisory Council (DAC) member, Adil Al-Dehan, alleged to PolFSN April 2 that the attack on Al Ibtikar company March 29 resulted in 17 deaths and the abduction of the branch director (the media reported only 8 deaths). Al-Dehan also confirmed a March 28 raid on Daewoo electric appliance branch, where a number of employees were taken hostage by criminals dressed in ISF uniforms. Al-Dehan noted that these attacks had become more prominent in the past week, but was unable to point to the reason why.

13. (C) Abdul Sata al-Ru'ay from the Karkh District Council confirmed to PolFSN April 2 media reports of an extrajudicial raid March 28 on Musa Bin Nasir Exchange company in which money was stolen and six employees were abducted. Not reported by the media, he alleged, was a similar raid on a Baghdad food company in Mansour where 13 employees were killed and 2 seriously injured.

14. (C) The Al-Said Group sent Embassy Amman a letter (REF) which stated that on March 27, individuals dressed in police uniforms and using police cars detained 18 workers at the Al-Said offices in Al Mansour and drove them all to the MoI parking lot in al-Khadamiya. This attack

was reported by local and international media. The Al-Said company further reported that the six Shia employees were released shortly thereafter while the remaining twelve (presumably Sunnis) remain unaccounted for. According to Al-Said sources, the police are now seeking out the freed individuals and have managed to talk with Faisal Mohammed Ali, one of the six, to warn him to leave Baghdad.

15. (C) These accounts represent a subsection of seven reports that have emerged in the international and local media, but whose details have not yet been confirmed by MoI. In almost all cases, the raids were allegedly conducted by individuals dressed in MoI uniforms and sometimes driving MoI vehicles. However, MoI's Deputy Minister for Police Services Ali Ghalib stressed to Poloff April 1 that none of the raids reported in the media were conducted by MoI forces.

SMALL BUSINESSES TARGETED BUT IN DIFFERENT MANNER

16. (C) Sadiq Thamir of the Human Rights and Justice Organization noted to PolFSN April 2 that that the security situation for businesses had become more dismal over the past few weeks. Both he and several Baghdad residents have reported stories of local neighborhood butchers or bakers being gunned down or abducted from their shops. One local hire who lives in the Shia majority neighborhood of Baghdad Jadida reported on April 2 that his family butcher and sons were shot dead that same day in their store by an unknown assailant. Another local hire living in

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Ghazaliya has reported numerous occasions in February and March that bakeries in his neighborhood were increasingly being targeted, especially because of the ease with which terrorist can track store employees.

COMMENT

17. (C) MoI Minister Bayan Jabr recently was quoted in the news March 29 as saying that the Ministry would be developing a new security plan for commercial establishments. However, these plans may not be enough for businesses who believe that militia elements within MoI are responsible for these attacks. We will continue to monitor the frequency of these events which make the environment for business growth and stability difficult.

KHALILZAD